



Rukmini Vijayakumar

...a chiselled moment of poetry

Rukmini Vijayakumar

'I am seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movement',

-Isadora Duncan once said.

Rukmini, reflects the very same sentiment in her dancing. Her dance is her poetry.

Rukmini began her formal training in dance at the age of eight. She had an initial exposure to ballet, but her primary training and rigorous practice through her early years was in Bharatanatyam. She had her Arangetram, (debut, solo performance) in 1998 under Guru Padmini Rao, after which she continued her practice under Guru Narmada, (a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Academy Award) and Guru Sundari Santhanam (a senior disciple Dr Padma Subrahmanyam). She was introduced to the teachings of the Natyashastra, and pursued an intense training in the Karanas under Guru Sundari Santhanam for many years. She furthered her knowledge of Bharatanatyam by studying, Sanskrit, Tala (rhythm) in music, and Yoga.

She was re-introduced to Classical Ballet in her late teens and began a serious practice at various dance studios in California and New York, and under Yana Lewis in India. She branched out into, Jazz and Modern dance techniques and was accepted into the Undergraduate program for dance at the Boston Conservatory, one of the most prestigious performing arts schools in the USA.

She graduated with honors, obtaining a BFA in Modern dance and Ballet. At the conservatory, she was exposed to many other subjects that support dance and performance in the four years that she spent there; Alexander technique, Pilates, Laban notation and movement analysis, Stage design, Choreography, Dance history, Anatomy, Pedagogy, to name a few. She was introduced to Anatomy at the Conservatory, she chose to further her interest in this field by taking courses in Gross Anatomy and Exercise physiology at Boston University, and later began a Fitness Instruction Certification at UCLA. Her interest in body mechanism, resulted in her certification as a Mat Power Pilates, instructor.

She founded the **Raadha Kalpa Dance Company** in 2009, and began working on various projects under the Raadha Kalpa banner. She has conducted workshops, collaborated with guest artists, choreographed productions, and has also organized dance arts festivals. She is the director of her Art Space LshVa, in Bangalore.

Rukmini is an empaneled solo Bharatanatyam artist with the ICCR. She was awarded the title of "Arsha Kala Bhushanam", by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 2012.



She has performed in many venues in India and abroad and has been appreciated for her unique style, innovative choreography, athleticism, arresting emotions and attention to detail. Her recent performances at the 80th Anniversary of the Jacobs Pillow dance festival, USA and at the Erasing borders Festival, NY, were well received. Her dance productions “Nayani” and “Prabhavati” toured the USA, and Middle East, in 2012, 2013 raising funds for AIM for Seva.

She has performed as a bharatanatyam soloist in Khajuraho, Modhera, IIC, Hampi, Kartik Fine Arts, Bharat Kalachar, Narada Gana Sabha, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal and several other renowned festivals.

Rukmini’s enthuse in theater and acting prompted her study of Film and Theater at the New York Film academy and at the Ivana Chubbuck studios. She has performed in several theater productions in India and has received much appreciation for her delineated character of Aung San Suu Kyi, in the one woman show, “The Lady of Burma”, by Richard Shannon, directed by national award winner, Prakash Belawadi. She has also been lauded for her unique role as lead, in her first Tamil film, Bommalattam, with Nana Patekar directed by Bharati Raja. She was well recognized for her performance in Ananda Tandavam, by Gandhi Krishna and has recently acted in Kochaidaiyaan, with actor Rajinikanth, and Shamitabh directed by R Balki. She also has a special appearance playing a pivotal role, and a dance sequence in the movie Bajarangi, in kannada, released 2013.

She has endorsed several products as a model in many print and TV commercials in India and other Asian countries and continues to work in the Film and TV industry in India.

Though Rukmini’s interests and training are varied, her true passion lies in dance. Her dedication to dance and constant effort to strive for perfection is epitomized in every performance of hers. Her daily practice and incessant hours in the studio, constantly honing and tuning her skills every day, has made her a performer who learns with each performance and with every experience. A true student and a ‘forever blossoming artist’.



REVIEWS

Stopping Traffic Downtown With a Subcontinent's Movements.

“Wednesday’s performance brought a strikingly lovely woman, Rukmini Vijayakumar, dancing both the Bharatanatyam idiom and a modern number...The slender, supple Rukmini has a stirringly beautiful face, with burning eyes that repeatedly catch the observer's breath; and she makes those eyes part of the fabric of the dance.... She is the first Bharatanatyam dancer I can remember to do the splits, and in her modern solo she takes one sculptural balance and then adjusts it to hold her foot, behind her, up by her head... In terms of gesture, switches of angle and communicating swift changes of emotion (alarm, then surprise, then joy), she is not just engaging but also authoritative.”

The New York Times

(August 18th 2011, By Alastair Macaulay)

Sublime Abhinaya

“Rukmini Vijayakumar gave an enchanting performance. The angalakshanas in nritta, nrutya and natya were well coordinated...”

- The Hindu (1998, Bangalore)

Rukmini Weaves Magic

“Rukmini... at Khajuraho, held the audience spellbound for an hour at the end of which they went into raptures... She was the youngest solo performer this year...each piece was carefully chosen and creatively choreographed to transport the audience into the other realm... Tears streaming down her face, Rukmini's surrender to lord Shiva was especially touching. The Ashtapadi was her masterpiece... her interpretation, innovative and original...”

- Bangalore Bias (March 17th 2006)

“Performance of dancer, Rukmini drew the attention of everybody during the Kalidas Festival. Her perfect timing and rhythm with the music was extraordinary...”

- Indore Journal (November 6th 2006, Indore)

“...Rukmini Vijayakumar mesmerized the audience by her sterling Bharatanatyam performance at Bharat Bhavan”

- Hindustan Times, (September 27th 2008, Bhopal)



Theater

Scripting a courageous tale

“In Richard Shannon's play, 'The Lady of Burma', Rukmini gave a fitting tribute to one of the greatest heroes of democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi, with her hard hitting performance...

It was a delight to watch and left audiences contemplative... The one-actor performance was a soul stirring narrative... Rukmini depicted a host of emotions... from grief... to euphoria... The Depayin attack where Rukmini described hundred of stones pelting was a tragic narration that left many in the audience somber.....” - Deccan Herald (April 2nd 2011. Bangalore)

Stark and Simple

“...Rukmini in her role as Suu Kyi brings a great deal of honesty and humanity to performance....
“They're killing everyone”, she screams as sound of Machine gunfire is heard... tears well up in her eyes... NGMA resonated with Rukmini's passionate outbursts.....”
- The Hindu (April 4th 2011, Bangalore)

Her style is like a supremely crafted piece of work, where every angle, tilt of the head, or eye movement represents a chiseled moment of poetry. The effect was dynamic.

- Chennai, The Hindu, 2005